(a) whether Government propose to reconstruct the bridge (Bagh bridge) over the Tista river on the National Highway 31;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the concept of Government to construct a bridge at Sevak Bazar (alternative bridge of the old Bagh Bridge) is likely to come in force?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI R.P.N. SINGH): (a) to (c) There is no proposal for reconstruction of the existing Bagh Bridge over river Tista on NH-31. However, a proposal for construction of a new bridge in addition to the existing Bagh Bridge costing Rs. 98.55 crore has been forwarded by the Government of West Bengal. As the work does not find a place in the Annual Plan 2009-10 and the State has sufficient ongoing works in hand for completion within allocated funds, there is no likelihood of the sanction being accorded to this work during 2009-10.

Upgradation of state Highways to National Highways

1508. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Gujarat has submitted a proposal to the Government of India for the upgradation of State Highways to National Highways keeping in view that Gujarat has 25 per cent of country's coast line with many ports which need to be upgraded to National Highway; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government and the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI R.P.N. SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Expansion of NH network is a continuous process and declaration of new NH is taken up from time to time depending upon requirement of connectivity, *inter-se* priority and availability of funds.

Vadodara-Mumbai express highway

1509. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 730 given in the Rajya Sabha on 23rd October, 2008 and state:

(a) whether the Request for Qualification has been invited by Government;

(b) if so, whether the work on the said express way has been started;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether it is a fact that Government of Gujarat has frozen land in 300 m width along the proposed alignment of Vadodara-Mumbai Express Highways as back as 1991;

(e) if so, by when the land acquisition will start; and

(f) whether time frame has been fixed by the Government of India to start the Vadodara-Mumbai Express Highway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI R.P.N. SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) As the feasibility study has not been completed so far, the request for qualification has not been invited.

(d) Yes Sir.

(e) and (f) The process of land acquisition would be started after completion of the feasibility study and it may take about two years to complete. The work is likely to be awarded by March, 2011 and targeted to be completed by 2015.

Progress of NH projects under the flagship NHDP

1510. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the current progress of the National Highway projects under the flagship National Highways Development Programme (NHDP);

(b) whether Government has constituted a committee to speed up completion of these projects: and

(c) if so, the recommendations of the committee and the action proposed thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI R.P.N. SINGH): (a) Details of the overall present status of the National Highway projects under National Highways Development Pcoject (NHDP) are enclosed as Statement *(See* below).

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Government has constituted a committee under the chairmanship of B. K. Chaturvedi. Member, Planning Commission to ramping up of NHDP. The committee has given wide ranging recommendations including modes of delivery of contracts, program financing, borrowings, support required from the Government, modifications in Model Concession Agreement (MCA), Request For Qualification (RFQ) and Request For Proposal (RFP). The Government has accepted the recommendations of the committee and initiated actions to implement the same.